

## COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

**December 6, 2005**

**4:30 PM**

Chairman Thibault called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Thibault, Gatsas, Osborne, Porter

Messrs.: R. MacKenzie

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Communication from Richard Exline requesting the conveyance of Parcel "A" and termination of an access easement at 1832 Candia Road.

*Board of Assessors: range of value - \$7,500.00;*

*Tax Collector: not tax-deeded parcel (no interest); and*

*Planning: recommend it be declared surplus subject to conditions.*

Alderman Porter moved to give a favorable recommendation of this request to the full Board.

Alderman Osborne duly seconded the motion. Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson stated this report will go to the Board later this evening.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Discussion of the disposition of the Center of NH Parking Garage pending availability of reports.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson stated we would request a motion to enter executive session under the provision of 91-A:3 II (d) regarding the sale of property. There is additional information available including a surplus report and it is my understanding there is some further staff information they wish to make available to the Committee.

Alderman Porter moved to enter into executive session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II(d). Alderman Osborne duly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

On motion of Alderman Porter, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas it was voted to reenter public session.

Robert MacKenzie, Planning Director, stated just briefly this Committee can recommend to the full Board that it determined this surplus. I did struggle with the issues of surplus for a variety of reasons. One is that the garage does make a profit at the present time. We did look at what additional improvements might have to be made but there are...it is a profit-making center. More importantly, I wanted to make sure that there are other properties in the downtown that do rely on the Center of NH Garage. We cannot afford to have buildings like the Beacon building or the Nynex buildings get into trouble if they can't get the parking supply they need. The Beacon Building is on Elm Street and it doesn't have any parking. We do have to make sure that those properties in the downtown have available parking to them. I did provide a map in this packet. You have a map that kind of shows the area that is currently served by the Center of NH Garage and some areas where the Center of NH Garage might help with redevelopment activities such as in the gaslight district south of Granite Street. There is a possibility that the City could build new garages but locations are somewhat limited and not as good at least for this purpose as the Center of NH. I looked at the Pine Street lot and the Franklin Street lot. In the long-term there may be some room south of Granite Street but there is no City property south of Granite Street. We will see more activity south of Granite Street and we will need to help those property owners redevelop their property. I think in reviewing this my last sentence in this report was that if somehow we could make sure that the 400 spaces that we control now could still be used by the public and could be leased on a long-term basis to those property owners that have leased them in the past for example, I would be much more comfortable saying that if they are still going to lease those to the public then perhaps we have the best of both worlds. We have the parking to provide to our other property owners and yet we can still get the proceeds from the sale of the property.

Chairman Thibault stated so we should make it contingent that if we do sell the garage it would be with the retention of these parking places. Am I hearing you right?

Mr. MacKenzie responded I would be much more comfortable recommending to you that we could determine it surplus if you were going to attach a condition like that. I don't know whether you are going to attach any conditions other than that it be available to the public for lease or short-term parking but that would assure

that we would accomplish the goal. Our public purpose is to provide economic development. If they are still going to provide those spaces to others then I think we can be more comfortable that our purpose is completed.

Alderman Gatsas asked Mr. MacKenzie how many spaces are leased by the downtown merchants in the garage.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I know I had spoken to Mr. Lolicata. I think the number fluctuates between 200 and 250 spaces.

Alderman Gatsas stated we have a total of 400 spaces. Do you think those downtown merchants would be interested in buying those spaces on an individual basis?

Mr. MacKenzie responded I don't know. I do know that a lot of the people that lease there are just individual employees rather than businesses and I suspect that employees would probably not be willing to buy spaces but I don't know what percentage of the 200 odd spaces are employee versus owner.

Alderman Gatsas stated I am looking at a number and saying if you could compute a number of \$10,000/spaces on 400 spaces that is \$4 million. If we condominiumize those 400 spaces to the people or the businesses that wanted to buy them and if they were available to buy them and own them, I think that really deals with the situation you are talking about – various entities downtown looking to protect their parking situation in the buildings that they are in.

Mr. MacKenzie replied again I don't know what the demand is for condominium parking spaces. I would be surprised if all 200 people who lease it now would be willing to buy spaces. Again, a lot of those are just employees versus business owners.

Alderman Gatsas stated your suggestion of building another garage...we have just sold two garages or are looking to sell two garages. Building a new one is somewhere between \$15,000 and \$18,000 a space. We sold one some two years ago at roughly \$500/spaces or \$5,000/space.

Mr. MacKenzie responded \$4,000 to \$5,000/space I believe it was.

Alderman Gatsas asked there were 600 spaces in the Canal Street lot.

Mr. MacKenzie responded yes there were somewhat more than that but you can say 600.

Alderman Gatsas stated so it was about \$5,500 a space. I don't think that we could find many businessmen probably in the world that would want to build spaces at \$15,000/space and sell them for \$5,500. We wouldn't be in business very long. How does it materially make sense for somebody that is looking for economic development in this City to say sell 400 spaces because that is all we really control there and lets build another 400 when we had an opportunity through the federal government to build 600 spaces at no cost to the City and for some reason that has just been a very quiet issue for the last four years. Nobody has talked about it. Nobody has brought it up and it has been hardly even thought about but I have thought about it quite a bit. 600 spaces that were earmarked to have been completed and started some two years ago that the federal government was going to pay for. I think you probably remember it because it certainly is very clear in my mind when it was supposed to be done and it probably would have taken some of the burden off of what we need in the Millyard on spaces that would have been available.

Mr. MacKenzie replied if I could, Mr. Chairman, I know you had some questions for the Southern NH Planning Commission a couple of weeks ago. I did confirm that that 600 space parking garage is still on the Governor's 10 year plan. It was pushed back two years. I think they were waiting for the City to determine the appropriate space but that is funding for a commuter parking pool lot, not necessarily for economic development purposes. I do know that in the recommended downtown strategy there will be a location recommended so that funding is...I am still hoping we could accomplish that and that would save the taxpayers a lot of money.

Alderman Gatsas asked and you know what happens to items that get moved on the 10 year plan from the front burner to two years down the line. If you don't, I know.

Mr. MacKenzie answered well it is still on the plan and I know that the State DOT has indicated that they would like to do that project.

Chairman Thibault called a recess to allow the Committee on Traffic/Public Safety to meet.

Chairman Thibault called the meeting back to order.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson noted for the record that all members are still present.

Alderman Gatsas moved to table. Alderman Osborne duly seconded the motion. Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Porter, duly seconded by Alderman Roy it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee